

What Is Sexuality? The Philosophy of The Concept of Woman and Man in Educational Guidance in Human Love, Rome, 1983

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I. Man and woman created in the image of God.

The document is founded upon the fundamental principle that woman and man are both created in the image of God. Or, put in another way, the image of God is reflected in a unique and important way in the complementary identities of woman and man: "Man and woman constitute two modes of realising, on the part of the human creature, a determined participation in the Divine Being; they are created in the 'image and likeness of God.'" (26)

Therefore, the call to live in conformity with having been created in the image of God is a call to sex complementarity. "Such diversity linked to the complementarity of the two sexes, allows thorough response to the design of God according to the vocation to which each one is called." (5)

Complementarity of woman and man is the view that the two sexes are significantly different and fundamentally equal. "The sexual distinction, which appears as a determination of human being, is diversity but equality of nature and dignity." (26)

II. Sexuality is physical, psychological, and spiritual.

Sexuality is not something added on to personal identity; it is a fundamental component of personality. The document states: "It is, in fact, from sex that the human person receives the characteristics which, on the biological, psychological and spiritual levels, make that person a man or a woman." (4)

The key point here is that sexuality is not simply a physical part of personal identity. The Sacred Congregation insists: "Sexuality characterizes man and woman not only on the physical level, but also on the psychological and spiritual." (5)

Contemporary culture, on the other hands, tends to reduce sexuality simply to the physical level of the person. The document criticizes this tendency to reduce the complex spiritual, psychological, and physical nature of the person to its most rudimentary level:

"Faced with a culture which largely reduces human sexuality to the level of something commonplace, since it interprets and lives it in a reductive and impoverished way by linking it solely with the body and with selfish pleasure, the educational service of parents must aim firmly at a training in the area of sex that is truly and fully personal: for sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person---body, emotions, and soul---and manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love." (16)

III. The vocation to gift of self in love

The Document Educational Guidance in Human Love seeks to help children learn the values of "self control, in the capacity of guiding the sexual instinct to the service of love and of integrating it in the development of the person." (18)

The gift of self in love is the goal of Christian life. This gift may be expressed through the Sacrament of Marriage, through the call to consecrated celibacy, or through the chastity of a single woman or man in a lay vocation. For all three expressions of the gift of love, a mature and integrated sexuality is needed

"The affective life, proper to each sex, expresses itself in a characteristic mode in the different states of life: conjugal union, consecrated celibacy chosen for the sake of the kingdom, the condition of the christian who has not yet reached marriage, or who remains celibate, or who has chosen to remain such. In all these cases the affective life must be gathered and integrated in the human person." (33)

Therefore, the sexuality of the person is what makes possible the gift of love in its physical, psychological, and spiritual dynamic. "The body, in as much as it is sexual, expresses the vocation of man and

and woman to reciprocity, which is to love and to the mutual gift of self." (24)

In conclusion, the philosophy of the concept of woman and man which is presentated as the foundation of Educational Guidance in Love includes an image of the person as directly reflecting the image of God. This image is manifested in a particular way in the sex identity of woman and man. Sex identity includes reference to physical, psychological, and spiritual components of the personality. The integration of these components allows for the eventual gift of self. It is the goal of education to make such a gift possible.